



File Code: 2670

Date: June 23, 2021

Route To: File

Subject: Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-08 – Fire Restrictions

From: Dean A. Gould, Forest Supervisor

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing temporary fire restrictions on the Sierra National Forest. Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-08 will prohibit campfires outside of Developed Forest Recreation Sites; smoking, except in certain areas; open flame devices; and the use of combustion engines off of National Forest System roads and trails. This Forest Order will be in effect from June 24, 2021 through November 15, 2021.

The criteria for activating fire restrictions through Forest Orders are based on National Fire Danger Rating System indices, fuel moisture conditions, and increasing human-caused ignitions.

The Sierra National Forest utilizes two indices from National Fire Danger Rating System, Burning Index (BI) and Energy Release Component (ERC), as threshold criteria for issuing fire restrictions. The Forest Service has determined that these indicators are reliable measurements for predicting increased fire behavior, large fire potential and fire ignition. Current conditions across the forest reflect BI and ERC indices at levels which would provoke these occurrences.

The totality of all these factors result in a higher probability of fires starting from activities prohibited by this Order and suggest that any wildfires would burn with extreme intensity and behavior. Furthermore, the Sierra National Forest has experienced an upward trend in human-caused fires. Preventing additional fires through this Order and its prohibitions will provide for public safety and protect natural resources. Per the Sierra National Forest Fire Restriction and Emergency Closure Plan, current conditions meet the criteria for issuing fire restrictions for all areas of the Sierra National Forest.

Line Officers as well as Forest Fire Management and Prevention Staff have assessed Recreation Sites and Wilderness Areas on the Forest. Those areas that lack flammable material or have had flammable materials removed to prevent fire ignitions from escaping into the wildland are listed in Exhibits A and B.

Additional information to include the Sierra National Forest Fire Restrictions can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/sierra/alerts-notice>, or by calling 559-297-0706.

This Forest Order includes an exemption for persons with a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization under this exemption will be provided only if I or my delegate determine that the risk to personal health and safety is reasonable considering the circumstances of the request. We also may require appropriate personal protective equipment and other necessary safety measures. I hereby



delegate the authority to sign Form FS-7700-48 granting an exemption to this Forest Order to all District Rangers of the Sierra National Forest.

Scoping efforts include the Sierra National Forest Fire Management staff consulting with Forest Staff Officers, Line Officers, interagency partners, local government cooperators and the adjacent National Forests and National Parks regarding increasing fire danger across the central sierras.

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 C.F.R. § 220.6(d)(1) – prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.